

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 02424 170620Z

13-11
ACTION EA-06

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FM USLO PEKING
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4916
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 2424

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CH
SUBJECT: DEATH OF KANG SHENG

1. PRC MEDIA HAVE ANNOUNCED THE DEATH DECEMBER 16 OF COMMUNIST PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN KANG SHENG. KANG, WHO WAS NUMBER FOUR IN THE PARTY HIERARCHY, HAD BEEN ILL FOR SEVERAL YEARS. PEOPLE'S DAILY HEADLINED KANG'S LONGSTANDING OPPOSITION TO "REVISIONISM" AND MADE THE ANTI-SOVIET CONTEXT MORE EXPLICIT IN THE TEXT BY USING THE TERM "MODERN REVISIONISM." KANG IS THE SECOND TOP-RANKING OLD COMRADE OF MAO TO DIE IN A LITTLE OVER NINE MONTHS (TUNG PI-WU DIED IN APRIL) AND HIS DEATH LEAVES ANOTHER VACANCY ON THE PARTY STANDING COMMITTEE.

2. KANG ALSO HAD A HIGH BUT LARGE SYMBOLIC GOVERNMENT POSITION AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. HE WAS PRIMARILY A PARTY MAN, HOWEVER. HE HEADED THE SECRET POLICE AND WAS CHIEF ENFORCER OF MAO'S LINE IN THE PARTY FOR MANY YEARS. HE WAS NOT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE IDENTIFIED IN ANY WAY WITH THE NEW SINO-U.S. RELATIONSHIP. WE THUS DO NOT REPEAT NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO SEND A LETTER OF CONDOLENCE ON KANG'S DEATH. IF A STATE FUNERAL IS HELD LIKE THE ONE FOR TUNG PI-WU LAST SPRING, WE WOULD

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EXPECT TO SIGN THE CONDOLENCE BOOK ALONG WITH THE DIPLOMATIC

CORPS IN PEKING. PRELIMINARY THINKING OF THE BRITISH, FRENCH,
JAPANESE AND AUSTRALIAN EMBASSIES IS ALONG THE SAME LINES.
THAYER

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NNN

Message Attributes

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